

KONAN UNIVERSITY

Art, Narrative, Trauma and Disasters :
Discussions on the role of mediators of memory
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fields in order to respond to this question. First, as an expert in psychotherapy for PTSD, Dr. Mori introduced his approach of 'Narrative Exposure Therapy' which is based on listening to subject's life stories and experiences in Kobe during World War II ('Narrative of Experience of war and psychotherapy of PTSD'). Second, Yumi Yoshikawa talked about her experiences as a curator working with participatory arts practices in the town of Minamisanriku before and after the Great East Japan Earthquake (March 11, 2011). These practices included the making of Kiriko (Paper crafts) or composing choral works whose lyrics were formed of people's own stories and memories ('Resilience of power of living: art practices in the town of Minamisanriku'). Third, Haruhiro Ishitani focused on the notion of mediation - both in theory and practice - in the fields of contemporary art and art therapy ('Mediating traumatic memories from a private sphere to a public sphere through art practice: the therapist and mediator').

Art, Narrative, Trauma and Disasters: Discussions on the role of mediators of memory (abstract)

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After the Great East Japan earthquake, various art practices began to emerge that focused on personal stories of victim's experiences and memories and responded to the imperative: "Don't forget the disasters". These 'memory collection' projects and practices quickly became widespread, with collections of personal stories exceeding the numbers collected following the 1995 Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. The term PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), entered popular culture and public consciousness around this time.

The centre where we carried out this discussion was also constructed on a site of trauma. Beneath the building was once the rubble and remnants of University buildings destroyed in the earthquake in 1995. Approximately half of all buildings at Konan University were destroyed by the 1995 quake. It made sense then, for this centre - built in 1997 upon this site of trauma - to be centred on the counselling of students and research concerning the care of the mind. The researchers and professors who were invited to the centre to confront these issues were drawn from various fields within Human Studies from psychotherapy, art therapy and philosophy, making the institute uniquely inter-disciplinary.

In this seminar, we focused on the significance of notions of mediation by means of art and narrative approaches to psychotherapy, specifically concerning trauma experienced during a disaster. When a subject begins to write about, speak about or express (we will use the term 'expose') their traumatic memories, it is important that this exposure is safely and trustingly accepted by consultants or someone who the subject is intimate with. We refer to this entrustee of the subjects memory here as the mediator of memory and it is their safe mediation of traumatic memories that can bring the subject confidence and allow their experiences to be publicly acknowledged in their community. In order to regulate psychological memory (therapeutic practice) and to mediate the personal memories to the public (mediation), we asked a question of what kinds of cooperation between practitioners of arts and the psychotherapists should take place?

In this discussion, three speakers presented their arguments from their respective

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